TAFT TALK

No. 55 *Newsletter of the Taft Family Association* Nov 2008

George William Taft and Ella (Ellen) Stevens married 1899 (photo submitted by Barbara Reisenauer Smith)

George William Taft and his wife Ella (Ellen) Stevens

Member, Barbara Reisenauer Smith, daughter of Albert Herbert and Irma Viola (Taft) Reisenauer, sent us this lovely wedding photograph of her grandparents, George William Taft and his wife Ella (Ellen) Stevens taken in 1899. A picture is worth a thousand words but when you look at this photo you see humor and intelligence that begs for even more information. Barbara has given us that as well. On several pages in this TTT you will find reminiscences of both Ella and George as well as George's father, Samuel Essex Taft, that will give you a glimpse into the personalities of this family.

It is so much more interesting for all of us to have stories that bring the people in the photographs to life and we appreciate Barbara for sharing her family stories with us. You will find more on this family on pages 3, 5, and 7.

In Memoriam

Mrs. Mildred A. Goss

"Mrs. Mildred A. Goss, affectionately known by family and friends as "Millie", passed way peacefully on Saturday, June 7, 2008, at the age of 89 years in St. Camillus Health Care Center, Whitinsville. She was the widow of Carlton L. Goss, who passed away in 1982. Millie was born in Mendon, March 29, 1919, the daughter of the late Clarence and Mary (Benner) Taft. She was a lifelong resident of Mendon, moving to St. Camillus in 2005.

"Millie, along with her six siblings, assisted their mother with the day-to-day operation of the former family-owned Taft Orchard. She continued assisting in the operation of the orchard until her retirement. She was a graduate of Mendon High School. In addition to working at the orchard Millie worked at the former Lowell's Dairy in Mendon. She also worked alongside her husband, serving as bookkeeper for his business, the C. L. Goss Contracting Company.

"Millie was a lifelong member of the Unitarian Congregation of Mendon, where she was active as a member of both the Afternoon and Joseph Emerson Evening Alliances. She could always be found serving at church festivals, fairs and suppers. She was an active member of the Taft Association and Mendon Senior Center, where she enjoyed participating in its many activities.

"Millie is survived by two sisters, Emma Barrows and Helen Congdon, both of Mendon; and numerous nieces and nephews. She is predeceased by her four brothers, Jesse, Robert, Austin and Daniel." (obituary from the Telegraph & Gazette June 10,2008).

Mildred Adeline Taft was the daughter of Clarence Augustus & Mary Emily (Benner) Taft. Clarence Augustus was the son of Austin Augustus (*Amariah, Jotham, Caleb, Daniel, Robert*) Taft. Her husband, Carlton Lewis Goss, was the son of Charles B. and Corinne "Cora" Taft. Cora Taft was the daughter of Dandridge Gordon (*Warner, Samuel, Israel, Robert, Robert*) Taft.

This brief notice hardly does justice to the affection and esteem that was felt for Millie by Taft Family Association members. For many years she served as secretary and was instrumental in the success of the annual reunions, including the luncheon we all enjoyed. Her brother in law, Robert P. Congdon, also died this year (see p. 7) and our sympathies extend to both families.

European Taffte / Tafte / Toft Marriages

Member, Marjorie B. Smith, has sent us data she found to add to our continuing efforts to find where our progenitor, Robert Taft, came from.

There has been much interest and discussion of Robert's homeland, but we have yet to find the answer. Ireland and England of course are the logical locations, but the location continues to elude us to date.

Marjorie found these marriage records in the St. Marys Parish Register, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, England (British Book 943.52/N1 K29n V. 1 marriages):

p. 5. Richard Toft m Elizabeth Lemyng 8 – 1572
p. 8 Richard Toft m Elizabeth Sybthorp 3 Nov 1579
p. 15 Richard Taffte m Elyzabeth Baulle 3 Feb 1588
p. 27 Ralphe Tafte m Grace Gill 2 Feb 1606

Perhaps this will lead another researcher to find an answer. Thanks, Marjorie, for sending this on.

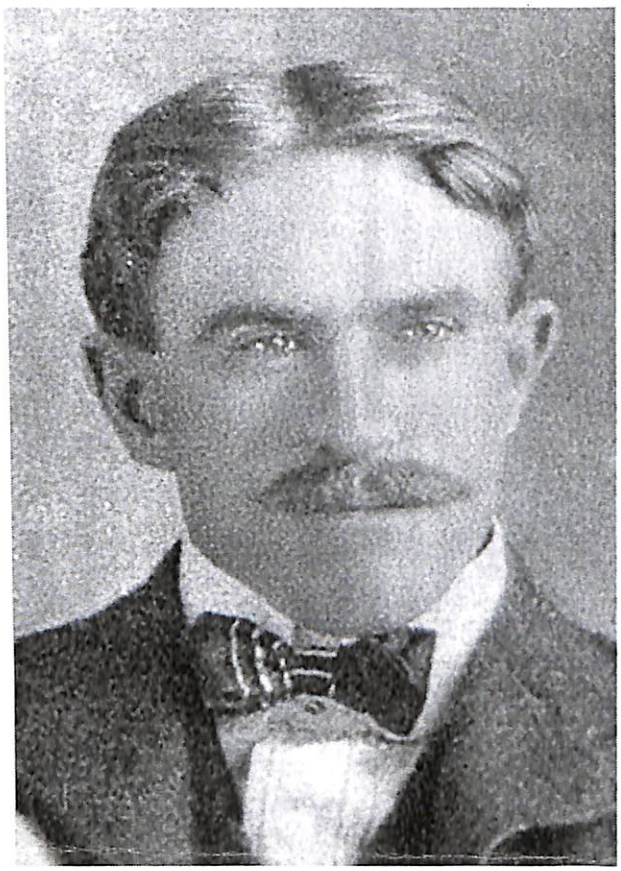
We want YOU!!!!

Next August is the 125th Reunion of the Taft Family Association.

It's time for new ideas and members on the executive committee – all positions are open to those with the interest – don't be shy. You don't have to live nearby either.

In particular we need a new secretary / treasurer. Unfortunately for us, Berneta has announced she will retire in August and we will need to fill that position.

We would love to hear from you – photos, stories, you name it, we are interested. And better yet how about writing an article for this newsletter – no financial reward but lots of good will!



George William Taft

Barbara remembers her grandfather:

"George William Taft, my grandfather, was at one point in his life a traveling salesman for the Cudahy Packing Company of Milwaukee, WI. Their company emblem was a peacock with all of his tail feathers on display and it was a magnificent sight to see. Grandpa decided these posters displaying the regal male peacock would look fine in the outhouse as at that time there was no indoor plumbing in their house. So whenever we had to use the 'facility' we would admire the peacock posters and, of course, study the out-of-date Sears-Roebuck catalog. Grandpa also raised peacocks and had a stuffed one that sat on the floor in the 'parlor'. Of course, that intrigued us mightily!

"Grandpa Taft was a prodigious reader and had quite a library. He was a letter writer and an admirer of the work of Aldo Leopold, the conservationist. He was also a history buff and followed politics closely.

"When he and Grandma stayed with us at our house he would wait for me to come home from school. In his pockets he would have two candy bars. In one, a Peter Paul's Mounds and an Almond Joy in the other. Depending on which pocket I chose I would get that candy bar. Now that was a real treat! Nice memories."

George William Taft (from page 1, also see pp 5 and 7)

George William (*Samuel Essex, Robert, George, Robert, Israel, Robert, Robert and Sarah*) Taft was born 19 February, 1874 in Necedah, Juneau Co., WI to Samuel Essex Taft and his second wife, Elizabeth Frances Ophelia Saunders of Lubec / Trescott, Washington Co., ME. He died 28 February 1944 in Mauston, Juneau Co., WI and was buried in Bayview Cemetery, Necedah, Juneau Co., WI.

George married 6 August, 1899, Ella (Ellen) Mae Stevens the daughter of William H. and Ellen (Street) Stevens. Ella's mother died when she was very young, and Ella was probably raised as a foster child by John William ("William") and his wife, Helen (Loomis) Kruschke, cranberry growers of Juneau County.

Five children were born to George and Ella Mae (Stevens) Taft. They were Ruth Bernice, John Saunders, Irma Viola, William Howard and Robert Samuel Taft.

George W. Taft was at various times a school teacher, a salesman for Cudahy Packing Co. of Milwaukee, WI, and Postmaster of the Necedah, Juneau Co., WI United States Post Office serving under three presidents. He was also the President of the village of Necedah and a school board member. He was a 32nd Degree Mason, a Shriner, a member of Eastern Star and of the Woodmen of the World. He was a Methodist and a Republican.

Information on this page from Barbara Reisenauer Smith and her family.

The Cornhill Coffee-House and its role in the Taft family and American history

Charles Murdock Taft was born about 10 Apr 1811 the son of Read and Mary (Shurtleff) Taft and died 10 Jan 1851 in Boston, Suffolk, MA (VRMA 59.3). He married 31 May 1838 in Chelsea, Suffolk, MA (VR 425) Susan H. Kingman daughter of Thomas W. Kingman. She married (2) 27 Apr 1854 in Boston (VRMA 80.46) Andrew J. Gavett. Charles M. and Susan Taft had two children: 1. Susan E. born 1839 Chelsea, MA who married Joseph Gavett 21 Jul 1859 in Boston, MA (VRMA 128.69) and 2. George F. born 1846 MA. Charles' father, Read, was the son of Marvel (*Ebenezer, Robert, Robert, Robert*) Taft. Read was a hotel keeper and Charles followed that path.

In 1845 Charles M. Taft was listed in the Directory of Boston as the proprietor of the Old Cornhill Coffee-House, erected in 1825. Mr. Taft hired George Young and just before his death in 1851, he sold the Coffee-House to Mr. Young. Shortly after his death it was still called Taft's Cornhill Coffee-House.

The Cornhill Coffee House, located near Washington, Court and State Sts., then known as Cornhill Square, has its own significant place in history. It is mentioned in many articles on the African American Experience as significant in the Fugitive Slave Law just prior to the Civil War. Boston, the center of abolitionist activity, had a large free black population and had been considered a "safe" haven to live or to find passage to Canada via the Underground Railroad.

"On Saturday morning, Feb. 15 1851 two officers posing as customers at Taft's Cornhill Coffee House seized the waiter Shadrach Minkins, a 'stout, copper-colored man,' who had escaped from slavery in Virginia and settled in Boston. Minkins was taken to the nearby courthouse for a hearing. Lawyers Robert Morris, Richard Henry Dana, Jr., Ellis Gray Loring and Samuel E. Sewall offered their services as Minkins' counsel. They immediately filed a petition with the Supreme Judicial Court seeking Minkins' release from custody." Lemuel Shaw,Chief Justice, refused to consider the defense's petition. Later a crowd of black and white abolitionists entered the courthouse, overcame armed guards and forced their way into the courtroom." [1]

"In a chaotic struggle black abolitionists arrested Minkins from his court officers, carried him off and

SALES THIS DAY.

PURSUANT to an advertisement affixed to the door of the Court House of the city of Norfolk,

WILL BE SOLD,

At Public Auction, before the Court House, at 12 o' clock, on MONDAY, the 23d inst.,

Negro Man Shadrach and Negro Woman Hester and her children Jim and Imogene, by virtue of a writ of fieri facias against the goods and chattels of Martha Hutchings and Edward DeCormis, at suit of Joseph Cowperthwaite, assignee of the President, Directors & Co. of the Bank of the United States.

jy 18—td s WM. B. LAMB, Serg't.

(Beacon copy.)

1849

Advertisement of sheriff's sale of Shadrach Minkins, 1849
Courtesy Gary Collison

temporarily hid him in a Beacon Hill attic.... On an order from Pres. Millard Fillmore, nine abolitionists, including Robert Morris, were indicted.... ultimately each was acquitted." [1]

Frederick "Shadrach" Minkins (1814?-1875), the first fugitive slave to be recaptured in New England under the Fugitive Slave Law, was born a slave and lived thirty years in Norfolk, VA before escaping from John DeBree. Leaving the Boston courtroom, he was taken to Cambridge, and from there he made his way to Montreal where Canadian law guaranteed his freedom. Minkins made a living in Canada first as a waiter and restaurant operator and later as a barber. He married about 1853 and had four children and settled in a community with fellow fugitive slaves from the US. He died in Montreal on 13 Dec 1875. [3]

Henry David Thoreau wrote in his journal "I to Myself" p. 103 for 1851 October 1 5 pm:
" Just put a fugitive slave, who has taken the name of Henry Williams into the cars for Canada. He escaped from Stafford County, VA to Boston last October; ... has been in Shadrach's place at the Cornhill Coffee-House (Shadrach had lodged and worked as a waiter while in Boston and Henry Williams had also been working at the same place)." [4]

1. "Long Road to Justice" (The African American Experience in the Massachusetts Courts, "The Ordeal of Shadrach Minkins" www.masshist.org/longroad/01slavery/minkins)
2. "The Time of Lincoln" from the American Experience www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/lincolns/slavery)
3. www.blackpast.org: The Black Past: Remembered and Reclaimed by Gary Lee Collison, "Shadrach Minkins: From Fugitive Slave to Citizen: Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1997)
4. Books.google.com: I to Myself by Henry David Thoreau, Jeffrey S. Cramer Journal 1851 p 103

Ellen (Ella) Mae Stevens aka Kruschke

Barbara remembers her grandmother:

ELLEN (ELLA) MAE STEVENS AKA KRUSCHKE

Barbara stated that the question of Ella Mae's maiden name(s) is because she may or may not have been officially adopted by the Kruschke family after the death of her mother and sister, Irma, when she was about four years of age. Her father "William H. Stevens gave her up to be raised by a family who adored her as he didn't' feel he could raise her and her older brothers alone being heartbroken over his loss."

Ellen (Ella) Mae Stevens aka Kruschke was the wife of George William Taft of Necedah, Wisconsin and my grandmother.

She was a petite woman with a waist so tiny that my grandfather could encircle it with his two hands.

My Grandma Taft loved music. Her piano was in the parlor (along with Grandpa Taft's stuffed peacock) and other furnishings. She played the piano with gusto and always from memory. As a young girl her piano teacher would rap her across her knuckles with a ruler if she played a wrong note so she quickly learned to play without mistakes.

Grandma also played her big walnut pump organ which sat in one corner of their bedroom. My older sister and I would play it but it took the two of us to do so. One of us would pump the pedals while the other one got to pull out the little knobs and play the keys. We didn't make music but we did manage to create a lot of racket!

In the dining room, Grandma also had a large walnut RCA Victor 'Victrola' with its trademark dog that required winding up with the crank on its side. There was a compartment to hold all the big, thick records that played on it. Among them were songs performed by Enrico Caruso and Madame Schumann-Heink.

Grandma was what was once described as "full of the old Nick" and managed to get herself into a lot of mischief especially when she was in league with one or more of her brothers. One time they managed to set the barn on fire, another time they consumed all of the candy the school-master, who boarded with them, had stashed away for the school children's Christmas party and yet another time she managed to get herself sprayed by a skunk. As she would tell me these stories she would do so with great laughter and a sparkle in her snapping brown eyes!

One could say that my Grandma Taft lived life to the fullest and was a person with a great sense of humor and adventure!"

All information on Ellen (Ella) Mae Stevens is from Barbara Reisenauer Smith and her family.

Once again a small world!

Neil Todd, our historian, continues to work on our DNA project. Recently new family members contacted him about the project and ***surprise!*** they are also descended from George William Taft (see p 3). Beth and her brother's grandparents are George William and Ella Mae (Stevens) Taft. Their parents however are William Howard and Clara (Cunat) Taft. Barbara's mother, Irma Viola (Taft) Reisenauer, is William Howard Taft's sister.

An enlightening eulogy on the life of Sabra (Aldrich) Taft

Tom Bowen has sent us this fulsome discourse on the life and dedication of Sabra (Aldrich) Taft. It is fascinating to read an eloquent eulogy not often found these days and to find a wealth of knowledge of a family's life. Tom spent a great deal of effort extracting this obituary from the Midland Republican (30 Jun 1887 p 5) and if you turn to page 8 you will see a continuation of his search for information on his family line.

Sabra (Aldrich) Taft was the daughter of Gardner and Anna (Colwell) Aldrich. Anna Colwell was a Taft descendant, as her mother was Anna (*Samuel, Benjamin, Robert*) Taft. Sabra's husband, Jesse Taft, was the son of Mijamin (*Nathan, Mijamin, Benjamin, Robert*) Taft. In addition Jesse Taft's sister Amy married Sabra's brother Gardner J. Aldrich and their son Gardner Arron Aldrich is Tom's great-grandfather.

THE LIFE OF MRS. SABRA TAFT (Discourse of Rev. L. H. Riddick at her Funeral, June 16, 1887):

Sabra Taft, was born Aug 16, 1795 in the beautiful and romantic Chenango Valley, Chenango Co., NY. Her childhood and young maidenhood were spent in this delightful region, where hilltops and river and forest and sloping fields, all units in winning the heart to the appreciation of the wonderful works of God.

Here also she united her life in marriage to Jesse Taft; the date is unknown but the marriage was a happy one and continued until 11 years ago, when death removed her husband to his eternal reward, having attained the good old age of 80 years. The husband was exceedingly active, carrying on the double labors of farmer and lumberman, and always found his wife one equally active and a help-meet in every undertaking. It is possible that domestic love and felicity then fully equalled that of the present day, when to live required united sacrifice, toll and courage; when home was sweet indeed "be it n ever so humble" because toiled for and possessed, rather than schemed for and mortgaged.

This marriage union bore fruitage in the birth of 7 children, 4 boys and 2 girls, Anna, Patty, Labar, Myjamin, Jesse, Ethan and Sabra. A glorious feature in this connection is, that they all, one by one bowed the knee and gave the heart unto God and were ever taught and encouraged by a mother's word and example. Three sons, one of whom is with us to-day, went forth and served our Nation as soldiers in the dark days of war. Two laid down their lives for the land they loved and a mother took her place with that great number who wept for the slain. Furthermore, of the 7 children were born 29 children to whom Mrs. Taft became grand-mother; and to 7 more she became great grand-mother, making a total offspring to this date of 43 souls. (Mr. E. Taft has since informed us that a more careful computation shows 68 grandchildren and great-grandchildren living and that the fourth generation was represented at the funeral. Ed. Republican)

A son and 2 daughters are in the far away Penn. and are not permitted to be present at these services. God bless them.

In 1829 when Mrs. Taft was 34 years of age, the family removed to Addison, Steuben Co., N. Y. where a good part of the remainder of her life was spent.

Here 44 years ago she and her husband attended a protracted religious meeting conducted by the Rev. Mr. Loomis and were most happily converted to God and united with the Methodist Episcopal church. The energy and activity that characterized their secular labors were carried into their religious worship and labor, so that religion became to themselves a thing of joy and comfort and a hope of everlasting reward and made them very serviceable to the church. They were great singers and Mrs. Taft was looked to as the leader of the brethren and sisters in service of song.

I have here Mrs. Taft's Hymn book, pub. in 1842. It is apparent what hymns were her favorites by the well worn condition of many pages. And here is her old family bible, whose leaves keep their places in handling only by great care. The bible and hymn book, the closet of the house of God and it may be the family alter, these were to Mrs. Taft her earthly riches, her constant incentive to a religious life and bade her hope through faith and obedience for a home in heaven; yea they placed before her a star so bright that the last few years of her life darkened by physical and mental weakness, could not blot it out. Blessed be God for his great love to the children of men. Her favorite hymns were rejoicings to a mighty Savior, exhortations to the unsaved to come to Jesus, expressions of courage and activity in the warfare against Satan and sin and frequent anticipations and rejoicings because of heaven.

Nine years ago she made her final removal, coming with her son Ethan to Midland, where she has received the affection and tender care of son, daughter in-law and grand-children. Looking at it from a human stand point it is to be regretted that for the last two years her powers of body and mind so greatly failed her--but God knows best. We leave it all with him. And now we surrender to the grave the body that for well nigh 92 years lived among men and the soul we yield to God who gave it.

She knew death was at hand and in her last hours exclaimed--"What makes the Saviour so slow--come and take me over, my Saviour." The Saviour hear her cry and Tues. eve. at half past 9 o'clock June 14, 1887 he came. He took her home and now she is with him forevermore. Children, grandchildren and friends, amidst our tears and sorrows let us rejoice. May her life quicken ours. Amen.

Our Mother at Rest
There were loved ones waiting for her
In those beautiful realms above
On the shores of Eden's domain,
Where all is perfection and love.
Life's river has now borne her o'er
Unl ing the earth broken bond.
Oh why should we wish her to stay,
When loved ones were waiting beyond
A father and mother were there,
A husband and children also
And brothers and sisters the same.

Tom notes the following errors:

Children's names - Labar should be Laban, Myjamin should be Mijamin.
Sabra was born in Smithfield, Providence Co., R. I., not Chenango Co. Her parents moved from Smithfield to Norwich, Chenango Co. in 1807 and to Plymouth, Chenango Co. by 1810.

In the poem, the word 'Unl ing' is given, but I cannot decide what the word is supposed to be. Maybe the phrase "uniting the earth's broken bond" is intended?

In Memoriam

Robert P. Congdon

"Robert P. Congdon, 89, of 12 Washington St., Mendon died Wednesday, July 2, 2008, leaving his wife Helen (Taft) Congdon, having recently celebrated their 66th wedding anniversarv. He also leaves one daughter, Priscilla Koopman of Northbridge. 3 grandchildren, Dawn Lefrancois of Uxbridge, Shelby Taylor of Parkman, ME, and Jeff Koopman of Northbridge; 6 great-grandchildren; and a sister, Marion Taft of Marlboro. Bob was preceded in death by his daughter, Marjorie Congdon and a sister, Eleanor Allen, both in 2007.

"Bob was born in Woonsocket, RI on August 24, 1918, the son of Charles B. and Annie V. (Phillips) Congdon. "He moved shortly thereafter to Hopedale, where he attended the Hopedale Public Schools, graduating in 1935. He then studied to become a machinist at the former Worcester Boy's Trade School, graduating in 1938. Soon after Bob started his 41-year career at the former Taft-Peirce Manufacturing Co. in Woonsocket, RI, retiring in 1980 as a Machine Tool Inspector. In 1944 Bob and Helen moved to Mendon. He was well known for the honey and wonderful fruits and vegetables that they grew on their Birch Alley Farm. Bob dedicated his life to serve other's needs. He was a former Selectman for the Town of Mendon; volunteered many years as the Clerk of the SwanDale Cemetery Assn.; served as Collector for the Unitarian Congregation of Mendon and Uxbridge, where he was a long time member; and also served on the Board of Directors of the Mendon Friends of the Elderly. He and Helen were long time members of the Worcester County Beekeepers Assn. and the Mass. Blueberry Grower's Assn. "

"Bob was also committed to the support of Masonic efforts. He was a 50-year member of the Montgomery Lodge A.F.A.M. in Milford and the Solomon's Temple Lodge A.F.A.M. in Uxbridge, where he served many years as Tyler. He was a member of the Mount Lebanon R.A.C., Aletheia Grotto, and the Gaspee Order #99 of the Sword of Bunker Hill. Bob's interests included baseball and bowling, rounds of cribbage with family and friends. Cross-words, working alongside Helen as they maintained the bees and gardens, and tinkering in his workshop. Bob firmly believed that 'duct tape fixes anything!'"

His wife, Helen Augusta (Taft) Congdon was the daughter of Clarence Augustus (*Austin Augustus, Amariah, Jotham, Caleb, Daniel, Robert*) Taft. Her sister died June 7, 2008 (see p. 2) Both families were deeply involved with the Taft Family Association and will be missed. (obituary from The Telegram and Gazette July 4, 2008)

Samuel Essex Taft, father of George William Taft (see pp. 1, 3, and 5)

Samuel Essex (*Robert, George, Robert, Israel, Robert, Robert*) Taft was born in East Greenwich, RI, the son of Robert and Rebecca (Essex) Taft. His father, like so many others, departed for the gold fields of California during the Gold Rush. Robert Taft received a fatal gunshot wound and family lore tells the following story: Robert started for California alone but young Sammy followed and joined him when far enough from home that he couldn't be sent back. Robert, his son Sammy and a partner were moving their camp to another location in the mountains east of Stockton, CA. Robert was walking behind the pack animals when a rifle on one of the packs was accidentally discharged, the ball striking him in the shoulder and severing an artery. The partner left for a doctor and young Sammy lay on the ground all night holding his finger in the wound against the broken artery. As the night wore on and the boy's arm became paralyzed with fatigue, the father, getting weaker, would repeat, "It's no use boy, let it go". But the boy held on until the partner arrived in the morning with a doctor. However, it was no use, for Robert Taft died six days later. After his father's tragic death, the partner, evidently not wanting a teen-age boy on his hands, decamped and left him to his own devices. He had many exciting times, worked for other miners, and finally returned to Rhode Island.

His mother said that one day while she was working in her kitchen, in walked Sammy, laid a small bag of gold on the table and said "Well, mother, I'm back". He later married and, about 1856, he moved with his wife Ruth (Capron) Taft and two small children to Quincy, Adams Co,, WI where he worked a farm. In 1858, he lost his young wife and a year later, his baby boy George F. Taft. Later he moved to Necedah, Juneau Co., WI where he lived the rest of his life, operating an outlying farm.

Samuel took the death of his first wife, Ruth, very hard but later married Elizabeth Frances Ophelia Saunders of Lubec/Trescott, ME. Samuel and Elizabeth gave the name Ruth to their first daughter. Samuel Essex Taft was a big man, with blue eyes, brown hair, and a ruddy complexion. Elizabeth Frances Ophelia (Saunders) Taft was a small, energetic person. She was a good musician and taught piano to her children and grandchildren.

Ruth (Capron) Taft and her son, George F. Taft are buried side-by-side in Quincy Cemetery in Quincy, Adams Co., WI. Samuel and Elizabeth Taft are buried in Bayview Cemetery, Necedah, Juneau Co., WI. (Article by Barbara Reisenauer Smith and her family)

One problem solved – but new ones appear

Roy Kline (*Margaret Zeitler, Johanna (Frank / Francis, Hiram Ward, Timothy, Timothy)Tyler*) wrote the following to our historian, Neil Todd:

"Several years ago I asked a question about Lewis Taft on the message board. I have solved those questions. I have a Tyler family bible, presented to Hiram W. Tyler on behalf of his grandmother by his uncle Capt. Lewis Taft in 1823. Hiram W. was born in Townshend, VT, the son of Timothy and Eunice (Rawson) Tyler. Lewis Taft was a half-brother of Hiram's father, Timothy Tyler."

Timothy Tyler was also born in Townshend, VT, the son of Timothy Tyler and Suzannah Fish (married 10 Dec 1774 Uxbridge, MA (VR 247). "Timothy worked at the sawmill, got a splinter in his hand and died of infection just before Hiram was born." Susannah then married Ebenezer Taft (married 24 December 1781 in Townshend, VT (VTVR). Ebenezer was the son of Capt. Robert (*Mathew*) Taft.

Lewis Taft was born 20 May 1791 in Townshend VT the son of Ebenezer (*Capt. Robert, Matthew*) and Susannah (Fish) Tyler Taft and died 17 May 1873 in Auburn NY. He married Sarah Brown about 1824.

"New questions arise: Lewis signed the Bible as Cap. Lewis Taft. I am trying to find out what he was Capt. of. I also noticed that his father (Robert) was also listed as Capt.

"I am now working on if I am a cousin to the Taft family. Hiram's mother was Eunice Rawson. The Rawson family is connected to the Taft family. My grandmother always told us we were cousins of President Taft. I know now it is not through Capt. Lewis Taft, perhaps through the Rawson family."

Note: In our quick search we found that Eunice Rawson was the daughter of Thomas and Eunice (Read) Rawson. There does not seem to be a direct Taft connection. In addition from our DNA study we know that Matthew was not directly related to our Robert Taft. According to the Taft MSS Robert Taft "served honorably in the Revolutionary War although his service records are difficult to separate from the other Roberts." He was called "Capt. Robert" in his second marriage record (VR Upton 135). We are uncertain at present where and when Capt. Lewis received his designation.

Could Elias Sprague be the father of Amy Sprague wife of Mijamin (1760)?

Tom Bowen writes: The Taft Family Association Webpage shows the Descendants of Benjamin Taft. In the fifth generation is my ancestor, Mijamin Taft (1760-), the grandson of the first Mijamin Taft (1712-1785) and nephew of Mijamin Jr. (1740-1817) the blacksmith, a Quaker. The above report shows Mijamin's wife as Amy Sprague and gives her father as Daniel Sprague. I would like to know what evidence of this parentage is known, circumstantial or otherwise. There was a Daniel Sprague living in Johnston, RI. I have also seen several trees on Ancestry.com that give Joshua Sprague, born Smithfield, RI, as her father, probably based on the fact he had a daughter Amy born in 1763, but he lived in Nova Scotia at the time of her birth and in Berkshire Co. MA after the Revolution began. Unless there is some evidence for Daniel, I have found that Elias Sprague is a likely prospect. Here is the background and the reason he would be a logical candidate:

Mijamin's father Nathan lived in Uxbridge but his marriage to Sarah Cooper is recorded in Glocester, RI in 1760. His first son Mijamin's birth was recorded 6 months later in Glocester and his second son Moses was also born there. Elias Sprague was born in adjacent Smithfield in 1744 and continued to live there until he moved to the town of Douglas, MA after 1790, where he died in Feb. 1799. He and his brother Nehemiah were both said to be Quakers. He had a daughter Amy born in Smithfield Oct. 6, 1769. Amy's age is shown in the 1830 census of Chenango Co., NY as 50-60 (assuming she was still Mijamin's wife), which would mean a birth date of 1769 or later. Her son Laban was born March, 1785, which means that Mijamin and Amy were probably married in 1784, and she would have been only about 14 at the time of her marriage, which I think would be possible. Years ago, I was told by an elderly cousin that some of her folks said Amy was a Quaker lady. Mijamin and Amy lived in Glocester (now Burrillville) until moving to Chenango Co. about 1811. Elias had a will in Douglas in 1799, case # 55294, as well as a guardianship #55295. If someone has ready access to the Worcester Co. probate files, the will might possibly answer the question.

Note: Our information on Amy Sprague came from Ervin R. Taft's records; however, Neil points out there are inconsistencies between that source and the Taft MSS (SG TAF 5). See page 6 for their daughter-in-law Sabra (Aldrich) Taft's obituary.

Sylvia Taft Lotspeich photo (Chestnut Hill Local obituary 2008.07.17)

In Memoriam

Sylvia Taft Lotspeich

"Sylvia Taft Lotspeich, 87, a vibrant, loving woman and an avowed Quaker who taught a combination first- and second-grade class at Germantown Friends School for 17 years, died June 26 at the Kendal retirement community in Hanover, N.H., where she had moved six days earlier. She had been in ailing health since April.

"Mrs. Lotspeich, the granddaughter of William Howard Taft, the 27th president of the United States, was a resident of the Mount Airy section of Philadelphia for 40 years. After she retired from teaching in 1986, she continued to work at the school in a parenting program.

"She was an outgoing woman "who had friends much younger than herself, and friends of her own generation," said her daughter Sylvia Lotspeich Greene. "We all adored her. "

"The daughter of Charles Phelps Taft and his wife, Eleanor, Mrs. Lotspeich was born at the family's summer home in Narragansett, R.I., but grew up in Cincinnati. She attended the Lotspeich School, where she met her future husband, William, when they were first graders. The school was founded by his mother. Mrs. Lotspeich married her husband in 1942, the year after she graduated from Vassar College. She later earned a master's degree in education from the University of Rochester.

"Her husband was a physiologist who taught at the University of Cincinnati and the University of Rochester medical schools. Mrs. Lotspeich and her husband had become interested in Quakerism during a stay in Oxford, England, and he took the position of executive director of the American Friends Service Committee in Philadelphia in 1967. He died the next year.

"Mrs. Lotspeich served on the American Friends Service Committee board until her death. She supported children in other countries through the Foster Parents Plan, then called Childreach. She volunteered for the Vassar Show House each spring and was chairwoman of the scholarship committee at Germantown Friends.

"She was a frequent correspondent in an age when few people write letters, and an avid reader, golfer, and tennis player, her daughter said. "She was an amazing correspondent who wrote not only copious numbers of old- fashioned letters and notes, but joined the computer age with relish and e-mailed everyone as well, keeping up with friends from the three cities where she had lived the longest," Green said.

"In addition to her daughter, Mrs. Lotspeich is survived by sons Charles and Stephen; two brothers; a sister; eight grandchildren; and two great-granddaughters."

Sylvia Howard Taft was the daughter of Charles Phelps II and Eleanor Kellogg (Chase) Taft. Charles Phelps was the son of Pres. William Howard (*Hon. Alphonso, Judge Peter Rawson, Sgt. Aaron, Capt. Peter, Capt. Joseph, Robert*) Taft.

We recognize in Sylvia Taft Lotspeich the many warm, expansive and inclusive characteristics that best exemplify our extended family. Our condolences go to the Taft and Lotspeich families.

Obituary from Philly Online. LLC 20080714 by Rusty Pray, Inquirer Staff Writer

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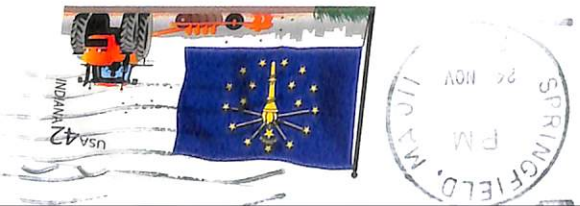
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